

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Proposition 50, Chapter 8

Integrated Regional Water Management Grant Program

Implementation Step 2 Proposals

PIN: 10073
Applicant Name: Northern California Joint Exercise of Powers
Project Title: Sacramento Valley Integrated Regional Water Management Program

Funds Requested: \$ 24,860,250
Total Project Cost: \$ 29,868,083

Total Proposal Score:	94
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Description: This proposal implements projects which assist in meeting the Sacramento Valley IRWMP regional objectives: Increase regional water supply reliability; Improve flood protection and floodplain management; Improve and protect water quality; and, Protect and enhance the ecosystem. This proposal will help implement the Sacramento Valley Water Management Agreement (Phase 8) to "reduce conflict between water users or resolve water rights disputes, including interregional water rights issues."

Question: Adopted IRWMP and Proof of Formal Adoption

2

A draft IRWMP was submitted. The applicant states that the IRWMP will be adopted by November, 2006.

Question: Description of Region

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The IRWMP contains a description of the region including the current setting, present water resources, climate, regional economy, and environment. The map provided shows the core IRWMP region in comparison with the overall hydrologic region. A limited discussion of the reasons for establishing the boundaries of the region is provided. There is limited discussion on water quality and future water resources. The applicant states that future demand projections were developed in the "Sacramento River Basin Wide Management Plan" for 20 year planning horizon; substantiation as to why those estimates are applicable to the management region is lacking. Land and water use and important development trends are still being developed.

Question: Objectives

4

The IRWMP has four main objectives: 1) improving regional water supply reliability, 2) improving flood protection and floodplain management, 3) improving and enhancing water quality, and 4) protecting and enhancing ecosystems. Each objective is further substantiated by a number of clearly defined sub-objectives. The objectives and sub-objectives were identified and developed through local and regional coordination, meetings and partnership efforts throughout the Sacramento Valley and beyond. The IRWMP mentions water right conflicts throughout the document, but examples and details are lacking.

Question: Water Management Strategies and Integration

4

The mix of water management strategies supports the objectives and priorities identified in the IRWMP. The rationale for non-applicable strategies is also included. The discussion on how strategies will be integrated needs improvement.

Question: Priorities and Schedule

3

The applicant describes the priorities and the process of establishing priorities. However, the draft IRWMP "Plan Recommendations, Prioritization, and Proposed Implementation" section is incomplete and will be provided in the Final IRWMP. The applicant is not clear on how decision making will be responsive to regional changes or project sequencing.

Question: Implementation

3

The applicant identified ongoing and initial studies, along with project funding sources and opportunities. The applicant also identified the entities responsible for project implementation. However, linkages and interdependencies between projects are not addressed. Timelines and status are deficient for some projects.

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Question: Impacts and Regional Benefits

3

The applicant does not specifically discuss the advantages of a regional plan versus separate local planning efforts. Benefits of plan implementation are provided. However, the discussion of the impacts from plan implementation is incomplete. For projects within the SVWMP, an EIS/EIR is being developed. Impacts from the SVWMP projects will not be fully evaluated until the EIS/EIR is complete in mid-2007. Monitoring for the SVWMP projects includes habitat monitoring. The applicant anticipates only short-term construction impacts. However, the applicant also proposes to mitigate any long-term impacts through monitoring and unspecified actions should a negative impact result from groundwater pumping. For projects outside the SVWMP, additional impact analysis has yet to be conducted and will be done so on a project by project basis.

Question: Technical Analysis and Plan Performance

3

IRWMP Section 5 indicates that there is regional cooperation and discussions on a technical level to arrive at water management strategies. However, a clear discussion of data, technical methods, and analyses used in the selection of water management strategies is not evident. The IRWMP uses text referring to the SVWMP; in so doing, the requirements of this criterion are addressed on a broad level but not on a detailed level. Data gaps are mentioned but not detailed. For instance, Section 5 states that information regarding the understanding of the groundwater system is needed, but specific data gaps are not identified. Evaluation of project performance is discussed for SVWMP projects but not other projects. The IRWMP lacks the mechanisms to adapt project operation and plan implementation based on collected performance data.

Question: Data Management

3

The applicant states that the majority of the data used in developing the IRWMP is available to the public through State agency databases. The IRWMP identifies recommendations on data management approaches and repositories which draw heavily from ongoing sub-regional efforts to evaluate data management. However, it is unclear how data will be managed and disseminated. It is uncertain whether the mechanisms discussed will be adequate for collecting and managing data and disbursing the data to shareholders. For water quality, agriculture coalition data is collected, but it is not apparent that the agriculture coalition sampling sites are applicable to the IRWMP.

Question: Financing

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Potential funding/financing will come primarily from State grants and federal sources; additional local funding is also expected. The IRWMP mentions past uses of federal and State grant funding sources. Local agency financial contributions are expected to be in-kind services and are estimated to be 12 to 15% of project costs. The applicant did not identify the means to provide ongoing support and financing for O&M of implemented projects.

Question: Relation to Local Planning & Sustainability

2

The IRWMP section that describes local planning and sustainability is still being drafted. In the application, the applicant states that it recognizes the need to review current and proposed water management and land use planning activities within each of the sub-regions. The applicant also states that the water management strategies will be developed to be consistent and compatible with local government general plans and that the land use-water management planning will cover a 25-year planning horizon.

Question: Stakeholder Involvement & Coordination

3

The IRWMP identifies stakeholders as water purveyors, Counties, conservation partners, and regional partners. The public outreach and participation portion of the IRWMP is not well documented. It is not clear how the public will be involved in the implementation of the IRWMP, other than there will be opportunities for input. Counties in the region are identified as disadvantaged. Comments received from some stakeholders state that their concerns with the IRWMP have not been addressed.

Weighted IRWMP Total Score: 19

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Question: Work Plan

9

The work plan lacks clarity. The Conjunctive Water Management Project makes references to the use of the SVWMA and Butte County monitoring programs. It is not clear if those programs are currently adequate for monitoring the proposed wells. Line item tasks are inconsistent between similar projects which reduces clarity of the work plan. For example, it is not clear that a registered geologist (RG) will be involved in well design of all the proposed wells. Is there a specific reason not to use an RG at all wells or is it lack of consistency in the work plan? While appropriate submittals are mentioned in the work plan, statements as to the timing of the PAEP are questionable.

Question: Budget

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Overall, the budget agrees with the work items shown in the work plan and schedule. However, the summary budget line items do not necessarily agree with the total of all the projects for that particular line item. The presentation of supporting documentation of costs is confusing. It may have been better to break costs down per project and supply the supporting documentation on that basis. Tracking costs for specific project tasks to supporting documentation is difficult. Construction contingency costs seem reasonable. Administration costs are relatively high and typically based as a percentage of project costs rather than based on work duties to administer the grant. The well costs for the Lower Tuscan Water Supply Reliability Project seem significantly greater than other well construction projects.

Question: Funding Match

1

The funding match is 16.6% of the total proposal costs.

Question: Schedule

3

Although the schedule shows numerous projects being started by December 1, 2007, the schedule lacks detail and it is difficult to assess the reasonableness of the schedule. The schedules are somewhat general, particularly for the Conjunctive Water Management Project. The Conjunctive Water Management Project is made up of multiple groundwater well installations. The schedule for that project does not show any milestones of the individual well installations. Because the schedule is so general, it appears that multiple components of individual projects are not included.

Question: Scientific and Technical Merit

12

Scientific and technical merit for each project is provided. Data gaps are not specifically mentioned in this section of the application. There is general reference to data gaps regarding groundwater levels and water quality in Attachment 3, but the treatment of data gaps is generally lacking.

Question: Monitoring, Assessment and Performance Measures

4

The proposal presents PAEP tables for both the Conjunctive Water Management Projects and the System Improvement Projects. The tables include project goals, desired outcomes, output indicators, measurement tools and methods, and targets. The measurement tools and methods generally refer to tools and existing measurements in place for each project. Proposed targets reference conformance with provisions of the SVWMA without further elaboration. The tables lack quantitative detail. The text for this section indicates the PAEPs will be developed early in the course of implementation. The work plan indicates the PAEPs will be part of the final report. The schedule does not indicate when PAEP development will occur. Therefore, the time line for PAEP development is unclear.

Question: Economic Analysis

6

Table C-4 is complete for all of the projects listed in the application. Table C-3 is not included in the application. Without knowing the annual O&M costs, a comparison of the complete costs and benefits becomes difficult to evaluate. The majority of proposed projects will lead to less agricultural diversion from the Sacramento, Feather, and Yuba rivers. The reduction in pollutant loadings to streams and rivers, as claimed in the application, is not quantified. The water quality benefits for the Delta seem to be significant.

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Question: Other Expected Benefits

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The Other Expected Benefits are ecosystem benefits and solar power generation. However, the ecosystem benefits have already been accounted for as water quality benefits in Attachment 10. The applicant proposes to use solar power for two well pumps for the Lower Tuscan Water Supply Reliability Project. The applicant estimates the solar thermal system will generate 416,000 kWh; annually producing an equivalent of \$62,400 in power. The solar panels avoid particulate emissions associated with the power source alternative (diesel engines). No analysis of avoided particulate emissions is included in this section.

Question: Program Preferences

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The application lacks a clear explanation of how each project achieves individual Program Preference goals and a discussion of the breadth and magnitude those preferences. The section also indicates that the DACs are not directly addressed through a specific project but rather how the entire region is disadvantaged and how the whole proposal covers indirectly DACs. However, the Program Preference is for safe drinking water and water quality projects that serve DACs.

Question: Statewide Priorities

30

The proposal is strongest at addressing resolution of water rights disputes, Bay-Delta goals, and assisting in meeting Delta Water Quality Objectives. The Conjunctive Water Management Project is explicitly intended to address Delta Water Quality Standards and to support a negotiated resolution to water rights disputes in the Sacramento Valley. The proposal addresses reducing inter-regional conflicts with water exporters. In terms of magnitude, this proposal can benefit water management issues beyond this region by reducing river diversions which will result in more water flowing through the Delta thereby providing enhanced water supply reliability throughout the statewide water system.

Total Proposal Score:	94
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